

# Agricultural Situation

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## RECORD WHEAT SUPPLY FORECAST FOR 1958

Wheat supplies for 1958-59 were estimated at an all-time high of 2,312 million bushels, 267 million bushels higher than the 1956-57 record, and 445 million bushels above 1957-58.

Supplies this year are: The July 1 carryover of 881 million bushels, the record crop estimated at 1,421 million as of August 1, and estimated imports of 10 million.

Domestic disappearance in 1958-59 is set at about 610 million bushels, somewhat larger than the 584 million bushels of 1957-58, because poorer quality will require increased feeding. This would leave about 1,700 million bushels for exports and for the July 1, 1959, carryover.

### 1959 Carryover

Assuming exports of 400 million bushels, about the same as in 1957-58, the July 1, 1959, carryover will total about 1,300 million bushels. This would be the largest carryover in United States history, about 420 million more than on July 1, 1958. The increase would be about 2½ times the 155 million bushel reduction between 1955 and 1958.

There is a moderate decline from a year ago in the July 1 carryover of hard red winter wheat and slight declines in white and soft red winter. Durum stocks are up significantly, while hard red spring stocks show little change.

The record crop of hard red winter wheat makes it certain the July 1 carryover of this class will be greatly increased. Hard red spring wheat carryover will be up some, but not to

### Record Crop Year

The biggest crop year on record is forecast as of August 1 by the Crop Reporting Board.

An estimated all-crop production index of 113 would be considerably more than the previous record of 106 set in 1948 and equalled in 1956 and last year. The per-acre yield index covering 28 leading crops is estimated at 137, a record high, and 8 percent above last year.

Prospects were for record per-acre yields for corn, wheat, oats, rice, rye, dry beans, fall potatoes, cotton, sorghum, and record production of soybeans, wheat, and barley.

a burdensome extent. Some increase is anticipated in soft red winter carry-over. There may be little change in stocks of white wheat and durum.

### Hard Red Winter

The large crop of hard red winter wheat and noncompliance with acreage allotments probably will provide sufficient "free" supplies to take care of domestic requirements and exports. However, sales of hard red winter have been small thus far this season considering the size of the crop.

Much of the wheat ineligible for support undoubtedly has been held back in expectation the market price would rise. The course of prices will depend on when this ineligible wheat is marketed. Marketing of soft red wheat also has been small, largely because wet weather has delayed harvesting.

Because of relatively weak hard winter wheat prices, average prices to farmers in 1958-59 may be lower than usual, relative to the support level.

Because of an increase in the wheat parity price, the national average support price to producers for 1958-crop wheat was announced on July 1 at \$1.82 per bushel. This was 4 cents per bushel above the "advance" minimum price for this year's crop announced in April 1957. The national average support for the 1957-crop was \$2 per bushel.

With a minimum allotment in effect for 1959 and no Acreage Reserve program, about 55 million acres probably will be harvested. If yields of 21 bushels per acre (average for 1954-58) are obtained, this would mean a crop of about 1,150 million bushels, about one-fifth below the 1958 figure. It would, however, probably again exceed domestic requirements and exports and further increase the carryover.

**The Agricultural Situation is sent free to crop, livestock, and price reporters in connection with their reporting work.**

The "advance" minimum national average support price of \$1.81 per bushel for 1959-crop wheat was announced on May 1. This reflects 75 percent of the estimated modernized parity price for wheat as of July 1, 1959.

World wheat production in 1958 is expected to reach a new high. Increases indicated for the three leading wheat producers (United States, Soviet Union, and China) are so large as to more than offset any possible decline in countries not yet reporting.

Crop prospects are relatively unfavorable in Canada. An outturn of less than the below-average 1957-58 crop of 370 million bushels is expected. However, the outlook is for much heavier production in Australia this year.

Acreage recently seeded in Argentina was reported in generally satisfactory condition, although dryness and high temperatures have handicapped development in some areas. However, an anticipated significant increase in acreage has not materialized, and seeded acreage is not much above that of a year ago.

### Imports

Continued production of large wheat crops in many of the world's importing countries indicates little change in world wheat imports in 1958-59, compared with 1957-58.

World exports in 1957-58 are estimated to have reached 1,075 million bushels, more than 200 million bushels below the 1956-57 record of 1,282 million. Exports in 1956-57 were stimulated by below-normal crops in many of the large importing countries, a situation which is not likely to recur soon.

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## Outlook

Total 1958 crop production was expected in early August to exceed last year's record by 7 percent, although less cropland is being used than in any year since 1917. Yield per acre index for 28 leading crops is 8 percent above last year.

Farmers are producing far more grains and soybeans than are likely to be used in 1958-59. A buildup in carryover stocks is expected.

### Feed Grain

Feed grain stocks are expected to increase in 1958-59 for the seventh consecutive year. Early August forecasts indicate this year's barley crop is a record. Corn and sorghum grain crops are second largest in history. Oats are above average. The feed grain total is a little above last year's record. When next October's carryover, estimated at a record 61 million tons, is added, total supply tops last year's record by 7 percent.

More feed grains may be fed to livestock next year, but the total will fall short of this year's production. Carryover October 1, 1959, is likely to be up from the October 1, 1958, figure.

### Soybeans

The 1958 soybean crop, estimated at 536 million bushels as of August 1, is 12 percent above 1957 and 81 percent above the 1947-56 average. Including carryover, the total supply is 66 million bushels more than a year earlier. Use of soybeans probably will rise in 1958-59, but the year-end carryover is expected to set a new record.

### Fats and Oils

Edible fats and oils will be generally plentiful in 1958-59. In addition to the big soybean supply, cottonseed and lard production are expected to increase somewhat, and the carryover will be larger than in 1957. Total supply of edible fats, oils, and oilseeds is

expected to rise about 10 percent from the 11.7 billion pound level of 1957-58.

Use of fats and oils in the U. S. probably will rise at about the same rate as the population and at a considerably slower rate than the supply will increase. Exports are likely to be large again, although competition in world markets will be keen. Several foreign countries have ample supplies.

### Wheat

The three-year downtrend in wheat stocks will be reversed this year. A huge record 1958 wheat crop, estimated on August 1 at 1.4 billion bushels, plus July 1 carryover of 881 million and an allowance of 10 million for imports totals approximately 2.3 billion bushels. This tops the former 1956-57 record by 267 million.

### Cotton

Although this year's crop, estimated at 11.5 million running bales, is above last year's, cotton is one of the few major commodities for which a sizable reduction in stocks is likely in 1958-59.

Although domestic use and exports are likely to be less this year than last, disappearance will still exceed production. Carryover on August 1, 1959, probably will be down about 1 million running bales from the 8.7 million estimated for this year and well below the 1956 peak of 14.5 million.

### Livestock

Production of meat animals is increasing as a result of big supplies of feed, good pastures, and relatively high prices. But marketings are not likely to rise until next year.

Hog slaughter this fall will average about the same as a year ago. Prices also are likely to be at last year's levels. In early 1959, however, hog marketings will begin to rise and prices are likely to fall to lower levels than in the past year or so.

# FALL POTATO CROP

## UP 11 PERCENT

The fall potato crop was forecast at 174 million cwt., 11 percent above 1957 and 14 percent above the 1949-56 average by the Crop Reporting Board as of August 1.

Production of late summer potatoes, mostly for harvest by October 1, was estimated on the same date at 36 million cwt., 11 percent above last year.

### Supply Up

Volume of white potatoes from the 1958 crop for marketing from now through the first half of 1959 is indicated at 210 million cwt. This is about 21 million cwt. above the supply from the 1957 crop.

There are two reasons for the anticipated large supply of Irish potatoes: Larger acreage planted and high per-acre yield.

Growers of late summer potatoes planted 6 percent more acres than in 1957, while in the fall States growers increased acreage by 4 percent. As of August 1, it appeared that the per-acre yield for the late summer crop would be 8.3 cwt. above the 1957 figure; for the fall crop, 6.7 cwt. above.

Both late summer and fall potato growers planted more than the number of acres recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture in its marketing guides. The growers overplanted the late summer acreage by 11 percent and the fall acreage by 13 percent.

For the late summer crop, growers in Wisconsin, Idaho, Colorado, Washington, and Oregon did most of the overplanting, while for fall potatoes, growers in Maine, Long Island, Minnesota, North Dakota, Idaho, Colorado, and Washington accounted for most of the overplanting of the guides.

As of August 1, the Crop Reporting Board estimated per-acre yields for the late summer crop at 185.0 cwt. and for

the fall crop at 191.4 cwt. Both of these crop figures would be slightly above the record per-acre yields from the 1956 crop.

Obviously weather conditions can change all these forecasts. Such hazards as early or late frost, drought, or floods, good or bad harvesting weather, have always to be taken into consideration. It is, moreover, all too plain that growers are confronted by many complex marketing problems.

Federal marketing orders and voluntary cooperation of growers in other States in restricting marketings of potatoes of certain sizes and grades will influence considerably the volume available for fresh market. Orderly marketing is also important. Consumers need potatoes 365 days a year and growers will find it advantageous to market the maximum volume each month.

It's common knowledge that the marketing of fresh potatoes from the 1957 crop during the four months beginning December 1957 was much higher than it had been a year earlier. For 1958, the growers' job is to move more potatoes than they did during 1957. This means moving more potatoes each day.

Oakley M. Frost  
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### Fall Survey Card.

Very soon now thousands of growers will be receiving the 1958 Acreage Survey Card from the State Agricultural Statisticians.

Please fill it out and mail it back promptly, because it is from information you furnish in this way that the Crop Reporting Board is able to make its annual summary on acreage, production, and yields of commodities in which you are interested.

# "Bert" Newell's Letter

Recently I visited a farm I used to know real well some 33 years ago. Say, that's quite a few years isn't it—doesn't seem that long—but 1925 is certainly 33 years back.

What I was going to say is, that this farm—close to 1,000 acres—used to be operated by the owner and, as I recall it, 4 or 5 tenants. Now the owner and his 2 sons operate the whole layout.

You know the answer of course. Back in the '20s there was one big tractor, with steel wheels and lugs naturally, that was used mostly for fitting ground. In the barn now are 2 big tractors, a big heavy truck, a pickup truck or two, corn picker, balers—well, you know the sort of machinery that it takes to run a farm nowadays. But my friend and his 2 sons were sure doing a beautiful job handling that farm. They said they only hired a little seasonal labor when tobacco was ready to cut.

As I rode around in one of the pickup trucks I saw only 2 horses on the whole place and they were used mostly by the young fellows who still liked to ride tournament. It's really sort of sad the way horses have been disappearing from the farm scene. They had personality and it took a good bit of know-how to handle a team—right, that is.

A fellow could learn some good lessons from a team. It puts me in mind of one time when we were filling the hay mow. We had a span of matched, dappled gray Percherons on the rope. I was sticking the hay fork. I guess I stuck it a little deep once and when they started to lift it didn't break away. The farm hand driving the team began to shout and holler and saw on the reins. His mule-skinner vocabulary didn't help a bit and things went from bad to worse.

I called to another man standing by to take the team. He walked over quietly, calmed the team down, then

picking up the reins clucked to them and walked them up quietly to pick up the slack. As they put on the strain he watched his evener and when he got them pulling together he gave the reins a quick slap and with a "hup hi" and a sharp whistle he turned them loose. It was poetry in motion. They took that lift of hay off the wagon like nothing at all.

The thing that interested me most about this whole incident was the farmer who took over the team. As he handed the reins back to the boy who had been driving he said, "With a team like that just let 'em know what you want 'em to do and they'll do it.

"It doesn't do any good to holler and shout and get excited yourself. All that mule-skinner talk doesn't mean a thing. You'd be better off singing 'Rock of Ages' to 'em. Most of the secret is in your hands anyway."

I remember that incident mostly because I had never heard anybody say it the way he did. But it seems to me it's a rather basic lesson to learn. Whether it's horses or people, if you let them know definitely what is to be done and give them a chance to pull together, 9 times out of 10 they'll do it and take pride in the job.

I guess one of the big reasons I like this crop and livestock estimating work is the opportunity to work with people who are close to the soil. Solid, intelligent, practical men and women who know what's needed and pull the load together like a well-matched team.

How can you beat a system that is backed up by over a half-million such people? They work together, not because some law says they must, but because they know that accurate, basic facts on the Nation's biggest business—agriculture—are absolutely necessary for a sound and prosperous Nation.

I know we can't go back to farming with horses, nor would I want to. But I like them and it seems to me that our world will always need a lot of plain, down-to-earth horsesense.



S. R. Newell

Chairman, Crop Reporting Board, AMS

## PEANUT SUPPLIES GETTING BIGGER

More peanuts will be eaten and more peanuts will be available for eating during the 1958-59 marketing year which began August 1.

Total supply of farmers' stock peanuts in this marketing year is estimated at about 2,000 million pounds, 125 million more than a year earlier. Consumption of shelled peanuts in 1958-59 is forecast at 4.8 pounds per person. Consumption on the same basis was approximately 4.5 pounds per person during the 1957-58 marketing year.

Most of the additional peanuts consumed probably will go into peanut butter (which accounted for more than half of the total quantity of peanuts consumed in 1957-58), although uses in candy and salting may increase somewhat.

Consumption of roasted type peanuts, some of which are sold in their shells at the Nation's baseball parks, has been on a slight decline for some years. Little change is expected in consumption of roasted peanuts in 1958-59.

The increase in supplies of peanuts for 1958-59 is due to a 15-percent increase in output, because carryover stocks on August 1 were somewhat lower than a year before. If weather during the harvesting season remains favorable, the 1958 peanut crop will provide many more peanuts than will be needed for food and farm uses, and the Commodity Credit Corporation is likely to acquire the excess under the support program.

As of August 1, the 1958 crop was indicated at 1,657 million pounds farmers' stock basis, compared with 1,445 million produced in 1957.

Most of this increase reflects higher per-acre yields. The estimated 1.5 million acres to be picked and threshed this year would be 3 percent above last year but 26 percent below the 1947-56 average. Most of the indicated acreage increase this year is in the Southwest where unfavorable harvesting

weather in 1957 sharply curtailed the acreage finally picked and threshed.

August 1 conditions indicated that peanut output will be down 3 percent from 1957 in the Virginia-Carolina area, but 41 percent greater in the Southwest and 19 percent greater in the Southeast. Estimated per-acre yield for the U. S. is 1,080 pounds, up 110 pounds or 11 percent from 1957.

Farmers will probably get slightly lower prices for the 1958 peanut crop than for their 1957 crop. This drop would reflect a reduction in the support price, since production is large to keep prices near the loan level.

The national average support price for 1958 crop peanuts is 10.7 cents per pound (\$213.20 per ton), compared with last year's figure of 11.1 cents. The loan value is the support price less about half a cent for charges for storage, inspection, and grading, and the expenses of marketing the peanuts cooperatively.

Average 1958 support prices per pound are: Virginia type, 11.2 cents; Runner, 10 cents; Southeastern Spanish, 10.9 cents and Southwestern Spanish, 10.5 cents. Loans on 1958 crop peanuts will be available both to individual growers and to grower associations from the time of harvest through January 31, 1959. Loans will mature May 31, 1959, or earlier, on demand by CCC.



In most postwar years, when supplies of peanuts were plentiful, civilians consumed about 4.5 pounds per capita, shelled basis, at prices about reflecting support. This level of consumption is about the same as in 1937-41.

In 1955-56, supplies of the ballpark type roasted peanuts were especially short and relatively high prices held consumption of all peanuts to about 4.2 pounds per capita, shelled basis. Consumption in 1956-57 moved up slightly and by 1957-58 had returned to the 4.5 pound level as supplies were heavy and prices declined.

### Consumption Factors

While heavier consumption of peanuts in 1958-59 is anticipated largely because of the bigger supplies available and the likelihood of somewhat lower prices, there are other factors. The extent to which the anticipated reduction in farm prices will be reflected in the price of peanut products purchased by consumers will have some bearing on the peanut consumption rate. Consumers' incomes are expected to be maintained well.

Assuming that consumption increases slightly as expected and farm uses are about the same as in recent years, at least 300 million pounds or 18 percent of the 1958 crop will be available for crushing, exports, and addition to stocks. As CCC will acquire most of the excess peanuts, quantity crushed and exported will depend to a large extent on management policy with respect to CCC stocks.

The Runner type peanut is most widely used in the manufacture of peanut butter. In 1956-57, about 53 percent of the peanuts used for this purpose were Runners, compared with only 32 percent for the Spanish types and 15 percent for the Virginias.

In the salting trade, Virginias accounted for 70 percent of the peanuts used, Spanish, about 28 percent. In the production of peanut candy, Spanish peanuts accounted for 53 percent of the total, compared with only 33 percent for the Virginias.

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### 1958 Lamb Crop Up 4 Percent

The 1958 lamb crop totaled 20.8 million head, 4 percent larger than in 1957, and 7 percent above the 1947-56 average, according to the Crop Reporting Board.

The 13 Western States (this includes South Dakota and Texas) produced 5 percent more lambs than in 1957 and 2 percent above average. The lamb crop in the 35 remaining States—the Native Sheep States—is 4 percent larger than last year and 16 percent above average.

In Texas, which supplies approximately 13 percent of the national total, the 1958 crop is 14 percent above 1957 but 7 percent below average.

The lamb crop percentage is a record high at 97. This is the number of lambs saved out of each 100 ewes, 1 year or older on farms and ranches on January 1, 1958. The average lamb crop percentage is only 90. This year's figure exceeds by 2 points the previous high of 95 in 1955 and 1956. Last year the figure was 94.

### Lambing Percentage

The Western States lambing percentage, at 92, is 4 points above last year. The Native Sheep States percentage is 108, compared with 106, and the Texas lambing percentage, 81, compared with 72 in 1957.

The number of breeding ewes 1 year and older on farms and ranches last January 1 was 1 percent above that on January 1, 1957, while ewe lambs under 1 year totaled 16 percent above the number on January 1, 1957.

The number of early lambs, in the Western States, was 7 percent more than a year earlier. Weather was favorable for lambing in much of the western area. Increases of 2 percent in both breeding ewes and lambing percentages resulted in the increased number of lambs in the Native States.

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## Popcorn Growers Plan Near-Record Acreage

Growers of popcorn planted the second highest acreage in history this year. If yields are about average, enough popcorn would be grown this year to fill almost 3 billion of those familiar paper bags full of popped corn.

As recently as the mid-thirties, production was only about 50 million pounds. Then it moved up to 100 million pounds, to 150 million, to 247 million (in 1957), still way below likely production this year.

### Extent

Some popcorn is grown in almost every State, but only 15 to 20 States produce it in commercial quantities. Traditionally it's a Corn Belt crop and a big factor in Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska, and Ohio. However, it's also grown extensively in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia. Popcorn matures earlier in the South, consequently the harvest season covers a long period, providing fresh quantities of new crop corn for commercial use.

The Indians had some popcorn ready to entertain the Pilgrims practically on the day Plymouth Rock made the headlines. The Indians had already learned to shake the popcorn over the coals in the earthen jars and to pour maple syrup over it. All they lacked in 1620 was the movies.

Popcorn is right at home in today's Rocket Age, too, because each little popcorn grain is a potential rocket. When it is heated to the proper temperature, it literally explodes, and as that happens, it expands from 30 to 40 times its original size.

It's a strange crop, though. It's so hard that livestock have trouble eating it unless it's cracked. Its main use is for popping. However, when the record crop was produced in 1945, some, unfit for popping, was diverted to livestock use.

Popcorn breeders, always on the alert to improve varieties, say they have high "poppability" when their popcorn has a high expansion ratio, pops well, and still tastes good. That isn't easy. Some popcorn will expand the full 40 times its original volume, but if it hasn't quality, it will taste like sawdust.

A grower has succeeded in getting "poppability" if there are only a few "old maids"—kernels that didn't pop—in a given quantity of the popped product. Moisture content is very important in popcorn, too. The corn won't pop right if the moisture is too much or too little.

Yellow popcorn makes up about 75 percent of the production. The white usually has a smaller kernel than the yellow, but it is very tender and tasty when popped. However, all popcorn is improving. Growers are planting better varieties than ever before.

### Cookery Note

Probably everybody has his own idea how to pop popcorn, but here's my recipe:

Take an ordinary iron or aluminum stew pan about 6 inches deep with a lid. Pour in enough popping oil to cover the raw corn well. Put some salt right in the oil. Heat this until it begins to smoke, then pour in the raw popcorn.

In a minute or so the corn will start popping like the machine guns in a gangster movie. Shake the pot until the popping almost stops. Then remove from the fire and serve hot. You can use butter, margarine, specially prepared peanut oil, corn oil, coconut oil, in fact several other oils, to give added flavor.

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# MILK COW NUMBERS AT RECORD LOW

Numbers of milk cows on farms in June 1958 were at the lowest level since the Crop Reporting Board first estimated the June cow population in June 1930. The total, 19.8 million head, was 3.5 percent below the June 1957 figure—the sharpest decrease in a decade. However, because of heavy per-cow yields as of August 1, the 1958 milk production appeared likely to approximate the 1957 record.

The decline in the number of milk cows on farms has now continued almost without a break since June 1944 which saw the all-time high of 25.6 million for the U. S. The 1958 figure is nearly one-fourth smaller.

## Regional Figures

There are fewer milk cows than a year earlier in almost every region. In the North Central States, which had almost half the Nation's milk cow population in June 1958, the decline was more than 4 percent.

In both the East North Central and West North Central regions, numbers dropped to record lows. Decreases varied from 2 to 8 percent in all North Central States, except South Dakota where there was no change.

Cow numbers in the South Central region showed an even sharper decline, 5 percent. The Atlantic Coast States, with about one-fourth the Nation's milk cows, indicated a 2-percent decline and the Western States, 1 percent.

As usual, Wisconsin led all States in milk cow numbers. Its 2.2 million cows were about one-tenth of the Nation's milking herd. Minnesota and New York followed, each with 1.3 million, then Iowa and Pennsylvania with over 900,000 head each. These 5 States accounted for over one-third of the milk cows on U. S. farms in June 1958.

However, the change in numbers of milk cows since June 1930 has not followed the same pattern in every region. The North Atlantic and South Atlantic

States, unlike the others, have more milk cows than in June 1930. The increase is about 13 percent in the South Atlantic States and 1 percent in the North Atlantic States.

The decline in other regions ranged from 2 percent in the West to 29 percent in the West North Central. It is estimated at 6 percent in the East North Central States and at 12 percent in the South Central.

June 1944 was not only the alltime high in milk cow numbers for the United States as a whole but also the record for every region except the West North Central. This region attained its milk cow number peak in 1934.

The largest reduction of milk cows from the record high occurred in the Great Plains area of the West North Central States. There numbers declined 39 percent from the June 1934 record.

The South Central States have had a 32 percent decline in milk cow numbers from their record high in June 1944. The East North Central States have declined 21 percent from the June 1944 high in milk cow numbers; the West, 15 percent and the North Atlantic and South Atlantic States, 7 percent.

## Causes

Some reasons for the general downward trend in milk cow numbers stem from need for major changes in marketing practices and the large capital outlays which many of these involve. But the sharper drop in the past year is the result primarily of the sharp increase in meat animal prices.

Prices for some classes of cattle already have started to decline seasonally and, as marketing of both cattle and hogs increases cyclically, prices will recede and thereby offer dairymen less incentive to cull dairy herds as closely as in the past year.

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## How Would You Figure Tomato Supplies?

Day by day, in a number of ways, the Florida Crop Reporting office is drawing closer to its goal of reporting market supplies for Florida tomato growers on the basis of planting time data.

This project was launched in 1956. It is financed jointly by the Florida Tomato Committee, an organization of growers, and, on a matching basis, by the Agricultural Marketing Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, under provisions of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

The Crop Reporting Service already has made considerable progress in gathering and distributing planting information. By Tuesday of each week, during the tomato season, all the previous week's plantings have been collected, summarized, and mailed to a long list of growers and industry representatives. The Florida office has three fieldmen in constant touch with growers. The idea is to keep a running tally on tomato plantings of all Florida farmers rather than merely a selected few.

Glutted markets, for example, don't just happen. They are caused when supplies outrun demand. They are costly because of the large price discounts necessary to clear marketing channels and because of heavy spoil-

age. Gluts leave farmers only remote prospects of recovering production costs.

First step, then, in adjusting supplies for market is for farmers to gauge their prospective supplies accurately. Timely planting records, the kind of records the Florida office is building up, enable the grower to make reasonably accurate predictions of short-time supplies.

A word of caution, though. The rate of harvest will not correspond exactly to the rate at which tomatoes are planted. Tomatoes are not harvested in one batch as celery and sweet corn are. Growers will normally pick the same field of mature green tomatoes about four times in a season. Harvesting, therefore, lags behind plantings.

Suppose a farmer plants 100 acres of tomatoes each week for 4 consecutive weeks, and the crop is picked mature green at weekly intervals. Now suppose a 200-box crop per acre is picked in this sequence: First picking, 20 percent; second, 30 percent; third, 30 percent; and fourth, 20 percent. What would his pattern of harvest be?

In the first week of harvest, a modest volume of 4,000 boxes is picked. This builds up gradually to a peak of 20,000 boxes during the fourth week of harvest when pickings are being made from all the four weekly plantings. After the fourth week, the volume of pickings declines gradually to 4,000 boxes in the seventh week.

Weekly harvest of tomatoes planted at weekly intervals<sup>1</sup>

Planting week	Expected production in harvest week							Total crop
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	
1st.....	Boxes 4,000	Boxes 6,000	Boxes 6,000	Boxes 4,000	.....	.....	.....	Boxes 20,000
2nd.....	.....	4,000	6,000	6,000	4,000	.....	.....	20,000
3rd.....	.....	.....	4,000	6,000	6,000	4,000	.....	20,000
4th.....	.....	.....	.....	4,000	6,000	6,000	4,000	20,000
Total.....	4,000	10,000	16,000	20,000	16,000	10,000	4,000	80,000

<sup>1</sup> 100 acres planted each week; yield per acre 200 boxes.

## Other Factors

Predictions for the overall industry, naturally, cannot be made as accurately as they could be made in this particular illustration. In addition to knowing the time of planting and amount of acreage, one has to take into consideration rainfall, cultural practices, and temperatures from area to area.

The accumulative temperature at which a given variety matures is the same everywhere, but the number of days necessary to reach this accumulative temperature varies from one locality to another depending on the mean average daily temperature in each area.

Farmers, however, can learn the accumulative temperature or heat unit requirements of the variety as well as the average temperature in the area. Then they can predetermine, with reasonable accuracy, the average length of harvest for that crop in their locality.

Plantings made during a cool spell will tend to mature at about the same time as plantings that immediately preceded. Just because a field is planted two weeks after a previous field does not mean that the two crops will be harvested two weeks apart. The sequence of harvest, between successive plantings, depends primarily on temperature accumulations between plantings. Successive plantings in the warm summer or fall months will tend to mature at dates further apart than plantings in the winter. This is why growers frequently observe that their January and February plantings come on at about the same time.

Excessive rain or cold weather will, of course, affect the health of the plant and the quality and quantity of fruit harvested. Finally, the way in which the grower does his spraying and fertilizing is a big factor. Despite these difficulties, substantial progress has been made in recent years.

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## 1959 Acreage Guides for Vegetables, Potatoes

To insure normal supplies without glutting the market, the United States Department of Agriculture recommends that growers of 1959 winter potatoes cut acreage by 10 percent from 1958 and growers of 1959 winter fresh vegetables make an overall reduction of 2 percent.

These calculations assume marketings will be seasonally normal, USDA said in its latest acreage-marketing guides. Action by growers is voluntary.

Under the program, vegetable growers are given the basic marketing information essential in formulating plans. Given latest and most accurate information possible, the growers will make intelligent planting decisions for their own and the industry's best interests.

The guides cover 16 major winter vegetables which will be marketed in fresh form principally during the first 3 months of 1959, as well as the 1959 winter season potatoes.

USDA recommends planting of 240,500 acres in vegetables, compared with 244,800 acres in 1958. Production from the reduced winter potato acreage would, at average yields, approximate 5.6 million cwt.

Specific guide recommendations are:

Decreases (15 percent)—escarole, green peppers, celery (in California and Florida).

Decreases (10 percent)—potatoes, lettuce (in California only).

Decreases (5 percent)—cabbage, tomatoes.

Same acreage—beets, broccoli, carrots (in California and Arizona), kale, shallots, spinach, lettuce (outside of California), celery (in Arizona).

Increases (10 percent)—snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, carrots (in Texas).

Increases (20 percent)—cauliflower.

D. S. Kuryloski  
*Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS*



Would you like to drive in air-conditioned comfort along your own private tunnel-road all the way from Chicago to New York?

You could, you know, if our Nation's refrigerated warehouses—which growers have helped to stock with nearly every food item from soup to nuts—were reconstructed into a single unit.

The Crop Reporting Board reported 901 million gross cubic feet of refrigerated warehouse space in the United States in its recently completed 19th biennial survey of refrigerated warehouse capacity. If this space were constructed into a corridor 20 feet wide and 8 feet high, you could drive under controlled temperatures for 1,066 miles. Starting in Chicago, you could easily make it to New York. Or down to New Orleans.

Refrigerated warehouse space has increased by 88 million cubic feet since 1955. It has been increasing at an average annual rate of 23 million cubic feet in the last 10 years.

Or to put it another way, we now have storage space to accommodate a freight train, made up of 450,000 cars, each one packed tight with commodities raised by United States growers.

If you had gone checking through the Nation's refrigerator 20 years ago, you probably would have found shell eggs the most conspicuous single item in the spring and early summer; apples and red meats in the fall and winter. Yes, these products are still

being stored in considerable quantities today, but they are far exceeded in tonnage by frozen fruits, vegetables, poultry, and dairy products.

The advent of frozen foods has simplified the housewife's cooking chores. It has even made the bachelor's cooking problem more pleasant. Furthermore, consumer acceptance of frozen food has been, in part, responsible for the wide variety of foods found in the Nation's refrigerator. Consequently, it has been responsible for a wider variety of marketing opportunities for the grower.

Growers profit in another way. Modern transportation, communication, and power transmission systems have made it possible for the industry to locate its refrigerated plants closer to the fruit and vegetable grower. The grower, therefore, can have his commodities frozen within a short time after he has harvested them. This means a better product for sale.

Another big service to growers today is the Crop Reporting Board's monthly Cold Storage Report. Operators of the cold storage warehouses report their inventories so that producers, among others, can determine how rapidly stockpiles are being built in particular commodities. This information gives growers a good line on the price they may expect and helps them to avoid surpluses.

Kenneth D. Ackers  
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

# Lettuce Growers Move With the Times

It was hardly more than yesterday that the great majority of California lettuce growers were shipping their commodity through packing sheds. Today, most California growers use field packing—and save money.

The Agricultural Marketing Service says that the shift from shed to field packing over the past few years has tended to reduce costs at shipping point or at least to prevent them from rising as much as they would have done under the old method.

## Costs

In 1953, costs of harvesting, packing, and cooling by shed-packing methods averaged \$1.89 a crate. Field-packing cut that cost to an average of \$1.48 a crate for the same quantity of lettuce, a reduction of 22 percent.

In 1956, the costs of harvesting, packing, and cooling a crate equivalent (2 cartons) of lettuce were \$1.54, an increase of only 4 percent over 1953.

California growers produced, in 1956, 60 percent of all the lettuce grown in this country and made 70 percent of the lettuce shipments. The lettuce industry is a big industry. In 1956, lettuce marketed nationally was valued at about \$135 million, third highest for any vegetable in the United States.

This is the old, relatively expensive way in which California lettuce was harvested only 10 years ago—the packing-shed way.

First step was for a field-crew to cut the lettuce and place it on the belt of a conveyor-loader. This dumped the lettuce into large field baskets carried on flatbed trucks and holding from 700 to 900 heads of lettuce. The trucks hauled the commodity up to the packinghouse at distances up to 50 miles. At the packinghouse, the heads were trimmed, graded, and packed into wooden crates containing layers of ice.

The new way, the field-pack way, is really two ways. If a ground-pack is used, cutters harvest the lettuce and pack it directly into fiberboard cartons that are either on the ground or on low wheelbarrows.

Cartons are distributed through the field before harvesting and are picked up by a truck-crew after being packed.

With the machine-pack method, a crew working with a field harvesting machine cuts, trims, packs, and assembles the lettuce in one operation. Cutters cut, trim, and place into rows lettuce from two raised double-row plant beds.

The harvesting machine follows the cutters, straddling several rows. Then come pickup men who place the heads on the harvester. The cartons are then stapled, closed, and conveyed directly to a truck which hauls the lettuce to a vacuum-cooling plant.

Vacuum-cooling has made the field-packing method possible. It reduces the body temperature of the lettuce very rapidly. The more quickly lettuce can be cooled after harvest, the longer its quality can be safeguarded.

Alvin Z. Macomber  
*Marketing Research Division, AMS*

## Did You Know?

Mississippi County, Arkansas, not only led the United States in soybean production in 1957, but set an alltime record for production in a single county. Mississippi County produced 6,408,000 bushels, according to the Crop Reporting Board.

Champaign County, Illinois, which had led the United States in 1956—and most years in recent history—was second in 1957 with 5,721,000 bushels. This, however, wasn't much of a reduction from its Nation-leading 1956 production of 5,763,000 bushels.

Mississippi County, incidentally, was second in 1956 with 4,960,000 bushels.

# WHAT ARE MARKETING ORDERS FOR FRUITS, VEGETABLES?

(First of two articles)

The U. S. Department of Agriculture recently issued an amended Federal Marketing agreement and order regulating the quality, volume, and handling of Irish potatoes grown in Idaho and in Malheur County, Oregon.

Its action was based upon provisions of the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 as amended. Basic object of all such orders is to increase returns to the grower.

## Changes

The amendments add authorization for container and pack regulations. Major regulatory provisions on grade, size, quality, and maturity are unchanged. This is a fairly typical illustration of how marketing agreements and orders operate in a specific area.

Generally, marketing agreements and orders are used as synonymous terms, because there have been no recent agreements entered into for fruits and vegetables without a supplementary order. But there are basic differences.

A marketing agreement is an agreement between the USDA and handlers of a particular agricultural commodity. It is voluntary. Its terms are binding only upon the handlers who sign it.

A marketing order, however, applies equally to all handlers in the industry. That is why a marketing agreement is generally supplemented by an order, since there are usually handlers who fail to sign an agreement.

A marketing order may be issued only for commodities specified in the Act, whereas a marketing agreement may cover any type of agricultural commodity.

Regulations under a marketing order apply to the operations of the handlers, rather than growers, of the commodity regulated. Subject to regulation are all shipments in interstate

or foreign commerce, as well as intra-state shipments if they burden, affect, or obstruct interstate commerce.

Marketing orders may be issued for any fresh fruit or vegetable (including filberts, almonds, pecans, and walnuts, and apples grown only in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.) However, for canning or freezing commodities only olives, grapefruit, and asparagus may be covered.

The provisions that may be included in a marketing order are specified in the Act, but a marketing agreement may embody any provision carrying out the policy of the Act.

Finally, the marketing order has to be approved by at least two-thirds of the producers in an area voting in a referendum. The two-thirds may be calculated either by number or by volume of production.

At the present time, 36 marketing agreement and order programs are in effect for fruits, vegetables, and tree nuts produced in 20 States. More than 130,000 producers participate in these programs, and the products covered have a farm value in excess of \$870 million.

## What They Cover

The products include citrus fruits produced in Florida, California, and Arizona; potatoes produced in 16 different States; winter pears produced in Oregon, Washington, and California; tomatoes and cucumbers produced in Florida; Bartlett pears, peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots, sweet cherries, Tokay grapes, avocados, onions, cauliflower, green peas, raisins, dried prunes, dried figs, dates, and almonds, filberts, and walnuts produced in one or more areas.

(Next month: How is a marketing agreement and order program developed and administered?)

Floyd F. Hedlund  
Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS

## Grass Seed Carryovers Up; Legumes Decline

Carryover stocks were smaller on June 30, 1958, than a year earlier for most of the legume seeds, but larger for grasses. Some grasses have the largest or near-largest holdovers of record.

These are highlights of the Crop Reporting Board's annual Field Seed Stocks report. The data, compiled from reports by dealers, is of particular interest to growers of alfalfa, clover, lespedeza, winter-cover crops, and grass seeds.

### Individual Stocks

Dealers' carryover of alfalfa—the most important legume—at 40.9 million pounds is 11 percent under last year, but about 40 percent above the 1947-56 average. Domestic use and exports have been increasingly greater since World War II, and current stocks are not unduly large.

Holdings of certified alfalfa varieties, at 17.9 million pounds, were down 9 percent, but remained the second largest of record. Noncertified Northern and Central adapted seed stocks, at 15.6 million pounds, were down 15 percent, and those of noncertified Southern adapted varieties, at 7.4 million pounds, down 10 percent.

Carryover of clovers, the next important group of legumes, is down 15 percent. This year, dealers' stocks of red clover seed at 9.1 million pounds are 29 percent below last year and 24 percent below average. Even considering the steep decline in use, current holdings are small.

Alisike clover stocks, totalling 3.7 million pounds, are down 24 percent from last year and 1 percent below average. Ladino clover stocks, at 4.7 million pounds, are down for the fifth consecutive year, but still relatively high compared with domestic use.

Carryover of crimson clover, 971,000 pounds, is very close to last year, but stocks of White Dutch clover, at 3.2 million pounds, are 75 percent larger, and those of sweetclover, at 10.9 million pounds, about one-seventh larger

than a year ago. However, close to one-third of the sweetclover seed used for 1957-58 seedings was imported from Canada.

### Lespedeza

Stocks of *lespedeza*, the South's leading hay and pasture legume, are down 45 percent from a year earlier and 35 percent below average. *Austrian Winter peas* are down 69 percent, and *Hairy Vetch* down 26 percent. But *Wild Winter peas* are up 61 percent and *Other Vetch* is more than double last year.

Dealers' stocks of *bromegrass* were nine times as large as last year's small holdings and the largest of record. *Crested wheatgrass* stocks were eight times as large and second only to the 1945 record holding. *Perennial ryegrass* stocks were largest of record. *Kentucky bluegrass* and *slender wheatgrass* were more than threefold last year; *tall wheatgrass* more than double.

Farmers, as well as dealers, usually hold sizable quantities of seed. Sometimes they store it on their farms; sometimes they place it in dealers' warehouses.

Based on the 1947-56 average comparison, carryover of alfalfa seed on farms is one-third the size of dealers' stocks. Farmers' average holdings of red clover are about one-seventh higher than those of dealers.

### Farmers' Carryovers

For all other important seeds, however, farmers' June 30 carryover usually is only a fraction of the dealers' carryover. The exceptions are seeds used in large quantities on farms where grown—for example, lespedeza, sweetclover, timothy, and common ryegrass, redtop, Sudangrass, and crimson clover.

Estimates of farm carryover as of June 30, will be made later this year by the Crop Reporting Board. They will be published as part of the annual forecast report for each crop.

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**Farmers' Share of Consumers' Food Dollar**

<b>June 1957</b>	<b>40 percent</b>
<b>May 1958</b>	<b>41 percent</b>
<b>June 1958</b>	<b>40 percent</b>

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**Articles In This Publication**

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